

City of Rockville Environment Commission

Sustainable Development and Energy Committee (SDEC)

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

Diamondback Terrapin Room, City Hall

7:00 pm

1. Welcome / Agenda Review/Minutes Adoption

- In attendance: Rotraut Bockstahler, John Becker, Herb Winkler, Lea Rosenbohm, Devinie Rukshani Lye and staff liaison Erica Shingara.
- The meeting convened at 7:05 by Acting Chair John Becker. The minutes from the August meeting were approved.

2. Environment Commission Report

- Commissioners toured Fitzgerald Collision Center and recommended that the center be nominated for an Environmental Excellence Award by the Mayor and Council.
- The Commission voted unanimously to endorse the Sustainable Maryland Certified program and serve as the Green Team to coordinate certification efforts. Participation in the program requires approval by the City Manager and the Mayor and Council.
- The Commission is considering hosting a volunteer appreciation event.
- The Commission's strategic planning retreat will be on October 15.

3. Environmental Management Division Report

- On September 13, the Rockville Chamber of Commerce and EMD held a discussion on the proposed green building tax credit and the LEED-EB green building rating system. Members toured 2000 Tower Oaks.
- The water treatment plant renewed an agreement to participate in an energy demand response program that pays the City for reducing loads on the electrical grid during peak demand times through load curtailment and on-site generation strategies.
- COG hosted a series of climate adaptation meetings to identify possible impacts of climate change on buildings, land use, water, and transportation in order to identify sustainable approaches that can be used by local and regional entities to plan and adapt. The Mid-Atlantic region is expected to experience warmer temperatures, increased precipitation variability, an increase in severe storms, and sea level rise.
- A public information meeting for the Rock Creek Watershed Study will be held at the Glenview Mansion on November 9th from 7-8:30 p.m.

4. High Performance Building Tax Credit

- The SDEC reviewed the tax credit proposal summary document. There are two important steps to establishing the high performance building tax credit (a.k.a. green building tax credit) that was proposed by the Chamber and Environment Commission in November of 2010: 1) changes to Chapter 22 (Taxation) of the Rockville City Code; and 2) the inclusion of funds for the tax credit in the budget.

- There were questions regarding what actions receive credit for the alternative commuting transportation credit. They include telecommuting, compressed workweeks, mass-transit, walking, bicycles or other human-powered conveyance, carpools, vanpools, and low-emitting, fuel-efficient or alternative fueled vehicles. Bike storage and electric vehicle charging stations would contribute to credit.
- According to the Green Building Certification Institute database for LEED projects, there are currently only two (2) buildings in Rockville that have achieved LEED-EB: O&M certification: 1) Tower Oaks achieved LEED-EB Silver; and 2) 801 Thompson Avenue achieved LEED-EB Gold. At least six (6) buildings in Rockville are registered in the LEED-EB: O&M program and may be currently seeking certification: 1) 2101 Gaither Rd (Park Plaza); 2) ASHA National Office; 3) Four Irvington Centre (American Real Estate Partners); 4) One Preserve Parkway; 5) Tower Oaks; and 6) Twinbrook Metro Station I. Given that there are nearly 400 commercial and industrial buildings in Rockville, the additional tax credit incentive could increase participation in LEED-EB, especially by small businesses, which could benefit from an additional funding and outreach.
- The credit is not proposed to cover LEED certification costs.
- The SDEC voted unanimously to recommend that the tax credit proposal be forwarded to the Environment Commission for review.

5. Sustainable Maryland Certified (SMC)

- Reviewed the actions and requirements under the Energy and Green House Gas categories in the SMC program to determine if the City is eligible for credit (<http://sustainablemaryland.com/>).

Energy Credits	Credit Status	Notes
Municipal Energy Audits	Maybe	In 2003, the City entered into a performance contracting partnership and conducted audits of 13 buildings, made improvements, and completed an energy savings analysis. The city continues to invest in energy efficiency. However, it is not clear if SMC will award points for activities conducted so long ago.
Residential Energy Efficiency	Maybe	While the City supports residential energy efficiency through green building codes and education and outreach activities, program expansion would be needed to comply with SMC requirements.
Wind Energy Project	Not at this time	A wind demonstration project is not feasible by June 2012.
Innovative Demonstration Projects		Potential projects could include Green Power Community Challenge, Green Building Ordinance, and electricity demand response program.

Greenhouse Gas Credits	Credit Status	Notes
Municipal Carbon Footprint	Yes	2006 baseline can be submitted
Community Carbon Footprint	Yes	2006 baseline can be submitted.
Climate Action Plan	Maybe	While the City has committed to reducing greenhouse gases and includes reduction strategies in the Sustainability Strategy; a separate climate action plan has not been adopted by the Mayor and Council. It is not clear if SMC will accept the Sustainability Strategy.
Climate Change Adaptation Element	Not at this time	While the City has participated in discussions at COG on regional adaptation issues; it has not adopted an adaptation strategy.
Innovative Demonstration Projects		SMC has not provided guidance on what would be considered a suitable project.

6. Solar Residential Roundtable Discussion

- Rotraut Bockstahler described a partnership in Waldkirch, Germany where a not-for-profit entity affiliated with the municipality partnered with citizens of the city to finance the installation of a solar array on the high-school. The utility put up 40,000 Euro and the citizens came up with 60,000 Euro at a minimum of 1000 per person. The investors were guaranteed a rate of return of 4% on their investment. She will forward the article to the committee (it is in German, but can be translated online). Is this a model that could be applied in Rockville to encourage investment in solar.
- Staff will attend COG's Solar Workshop on October 6 to learn more about technology, barriers, partnerships, and financing options.
- Future steps to increase public education and awareness. The committee will draft a solar article for Rockville Reports. A draft would be needed by December. Herb Winkler volunteered to start a draft to circulate to the committee.

7. Member News / Announcements / Upcoming Events

- The Maryland Municipal League and the University of Maryland are offering a "Green Group" training to support the Sustainable Maryland Certified program on Saturday, September 24 from 1-4 p.m. John and Becker and Erica Shingara will be attending.
- Free Residential Energy Audit Seminar on September 21, 2011 at 7 p.m. at the Croydon Creek Nature Center.
- Free Residential Composting Seminar on October 19, 2011 at 7 p.m. at the Croydon Creek Nature Center.

- A dedication ceremony for Montgomery College's new green science center will be on Friday. The building has a PV array, green roof and other green features. It will be considered for an environmental award upon resolution of an outfall issue and the building's official opening. The Environment Commission and committees may consider touring the building in the future.

8. Wrap-up and Adjourn

The next SDEC meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, October 18, 2011** at Rockville City Hall. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.